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NEWS RELEASE

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced the filing of a civil forfeiture action in the United States District Court in Norfolk, Virginia.

The action stems from the seizure of a container on August 25, 2003, in Norfolk, Virginia. The contents consisted of 1,016 boxes of Marlboro Lights Cigarettes valued at \$1,420,000.00 in U.S. currency and 78 boxes of Stuffed Bears valued at \$1,950.00 in U.S. currency.

The complaint alleges that un-manifested and counterfeit cigarettes were shipped by FU Xin Yurn Trade Limited of Cheng, Yin, Ningbo, China, from Shanghai in the Peoples Republic of China. The illegal goods were intercepted in the Port at Norfolk, Virginia, on August 25, 2003.

Based on evidence alleged in the complaint and developed from the investigation, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials seized the contents of the container before it could be forwarded to TRS Stamos Incorporated, Wilmington, California.

United States Attorney Paul J. McNulty said, "This office places a high priority on making sure our ports are secure and not used to introduce counterfeit products into the United States."

The civil charges were investigated by the Norfolk Customs Service of the Department Homeland Security. The case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Kevin M. Comstock, Norfolk, Virginia.

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